

General Cowles House  
Farmington, Connecticut  
Hartford Co.

HABS No. 3-6

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District #3

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Harold H. Davis, District Officer  
29 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

GENERAL COWLES HOUSE <sup>1</sup>  
Farmington, Hartford County  
Connecticut

Owner: Mrs. John W. Riddle.

Date of Erection: About 1803-1808.

Architect and Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Two, and basement.

Materials of Construction: Brick.

Other Existing Records: See text. <sup>2</sup>

Additional Data: See following pages.

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with the Admiral Cowles House or the Cowles House of 1650 period, both in Farmington.

<sup>2</sup> See also the following references:  
White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs, vol. 12,  
no. 2, 1914, 1915  
Kelly, J.F., Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut,  
plate xlvii.

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The General George Cowles house stands on the west side of Main Street, Farmington. According to Brandgee and Smith's "Farmington", the house was built by (General) Solomon Cowles (1757-1846) for his son, General George Cowles (1780-1860). Francis Nichol's article "Old Farmington" appearing in "American Homes and Gardens" states that the house was built in 1808; Miss Florence Gay's notes give the date at<sup>5</sup> 1803 and the successive owners are: ~~General~~<sup>General</sup> George Cowles, James Cowles, Miss Theodate Pope (Mrs. John Wallace Riddle), present owner.

The first owner, became major-general, the highest military officer in the state. He owned a celebrated white horse; the family had fine stables and lands. The house, one of the most dignified in Farmington, was in its early days the scene of much gaiety.

The generous staircase in the front hall led up two full stories, past two ~~P~~alladian windows directly to the old ball room on the third floor. This room originally occupied the entire finished part of the story, taking light from windows at both ends and had an arched ceiling. The floor space measured 15½ feet by 39 feet.

The addition of several modern bathrooms and closets, about 1922, has reduced the size of some

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of the bedrooms in the main house.

There remain fragments of an old slatted screen which until recently closed in the east end of the portico to a height of about ten feet. There were four hinged sections midway in its height which could be opened when desired to give an outlook on the street.

Approved: *Harold H. Davis*

Sources:

Brandee & Smith "Farmington, Connecticut" Pages 14, 17, 18, 81 and 83.  
Francis P. Nichols' Article "Old Farmington" in "American Homes and Gardens" July, 1907, Page 257.  
Connecticut Quarterly, Vol. I, No. 1.  
Miss Florence Gay's Article "The General George Cowles House."  
"Farmington", White Pine Series Vol. XII, No. 2.

*Reviewed by H.C.F.  
1936*